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*E. S. Perry*  
1868

NARRATIVE  
OF THE LATE  
WORK OF GOD  
AT AND NEAR  
NORTHAMPTON IN NEW-ENGLAND:

EXTRACTED FROM  
The Rev. JONATHAN EDWARD'S  
LETTER,  
To Dr. COLEMAN.

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Late Fellow of Lincoln-College, Oxford.

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THE THIRD EDITION.  
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## NARRATIVE

OF THE LATE

## WORK OF GOD, &amp;c.



THE town of Northampton in New-England contains about two hundred families. After a more than ordinary licentiousness in the people here, a concern for religion began to revive in the year 1729, but more observably in 1733; when there was a general reformation of outward disorders, which has continued ever since.

2. Soon after, a remarkable concern began to appear in a little village, three miles from the town. From thence it spread to us in spring 1734, and increased during the summer. In autumn I proposed it to the young people, to spend the evenings in social religion; and to that end, to divide themselves into several companies, to meet in various parts of the town: Which was accordingly done, and the example afterwards imitated by elder people.

3. About this time I began to preach concerning "Justification by Faith alone." This was attended with a very remarkable blessing: The people in general were deeply concerned, and began earnestly to seek acceptance with God and Salvation in the way of the gospel. And then it was, in December, that the Spirit of God began wonderfully to work among us. A great and earnest concern about the things of God ran through all parts of the town. And the noise among the *dry bones* waxed louder and louder: All talk but of eternal things was laid aside. The conversation in all companies (unless so far as was necessary for the carrying on

of worldly business) was wholly upon religion. The minds of people were strangely taken off from the world: It was treated as a thing of very little importance: Men followed their business, only as a part of their duty; the temptation now lying on that hand, to neglect worldly affairs, and to spend too much time in the immediate exercise of religion. And this thing was exceedingly misrepresented, by reports spread in distant parts of the land, as tho' the people here had wholly thrown by all business, and spent all their time in reading, hearing and prayer.

4. But though people did not ordinarily neglect their business, yet religion was with all sorts the great concern. The thing in their view was, the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing into it. There was scarce a person in the town left unconcerned. The vainest and loosest of all, and those who were used to speak most slightly of inward religion, were now generally in deep convictions. And the work increased daily more: So that from day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought "out of darkness into marvellous light."

5. Hence there soon appeared a glorious alteration: So that in the spring and summer following, Anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God. It never was so full of love, and joy, nor yet of distress as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence, almost in every house: Parents rejoicing over their children as new-born, husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. "The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary": Our public assemblies were beautiful: The congregation was alive in God's service: every one earnestly intent on the work; every hearer eager to drink in the word; the assembly in general from time to time, in tears: some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love; and others with pity and tender concern for the souls of their neighbours.

6. In all companies, on whatever occasions persons met, Christ was to be heard of, and seen in the  
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midst of them. Our young people, when together, were wont to spend the time, in talking of the dying love of Christ, the glorious excellency of his Salvation, and his free Grace to lost sinners. Even at weddings, there was now no discourse but of religion, and no appearance of any but spiritual mirth.

7. When this work of God began, others round about us seemed not to know what to make of it: And there were many that scoffed at and ridiculed it. But it was very observable of many who occasionally came among us, that what they saw here, soon cured them of such a temper. Strangers were generally surprized, to find things so much beyond what they had heard, and were wont to tell others, that the state of the town could not be conceived by those that had not seen it. And most of them went home with wounded hearts, and with such impressions as never wore off. There were many instances also of persons that came to town, on visits or on business, who had not been here long, before they partook of that shower of blessing and went home rejoicing; till at length the same work began evidently to appear in several other towns in the country.

8. In the month of March the people in South-Hadley began to be seized with deep concern about the things of religion; which soon became universal: And the work of God has been very wonderful there; not much, if any thing, short of what it has been here, in proportion to the bigness of the place. About the same time it began to break forth in the west part of Suffield, and soon spread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland, and soon overspread the town; and I believe was, for a season, not less remarkable than it was here. About the same time, it began to appear in a part of Deerfield, called Green-River, and afterwards filled the town. It began also to be manifest, in the south part of Hatfield, in a place called the Hill, and after that the whole town, in the second week of April, seemed to be seized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of God. There

has been also a very general awakening at West-Springfield, and Lond-Meadow; and in Enfield, there was for a time a general concern amongst some that before had been very loose persons. About the same time that this appeared at Enfield, the Rev. Mr. Bull of Westfield, informed me, that there had been a great alteration there, and that more had been done in one week than in seven years before. Something of this work likewise appeared in the first precinct in Springfield, principally in the north and south extreams of the parish. And in Hadley old town. there gradually appeared so much of a work of GOD, as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a short time there was also a very great and general concern, of the like nature, at Northfield. And wherever this concern appeared, it seemed not to be in vain: But in every place GOD brought saving blessings with him, and his word attended with the Spirit, returned not void. It might well be said at that time in all parts of the country, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?"

9. This remarkable *pouring out of the Spirit of GOD*, which thus extended from one end to the other of this country, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut have partook in the same mercy: The first parish in Windsor was thus blest about the same time, while we had no knowledge of each other's circumstances. And something considerable of the same work began afterwards in East-Windsor, my honoured Father's parish, which has in times past been a place favoured with mercies of this nature, above any on this side of New-England, except Northampton.

10. There was also the last spring and summer a wonderful work of GOD carried on at Coventry. I had opportunity to converse with some of Coventry people, who gave me a very remarkable account of the surprizing Change that appeared in the most rude and vicious persons there. The like was also very great at the same time in part of Lebanon, called the Crank, and at Durham; and likewise  
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amongst many of the young people in the first precinct in Stafford.

Something of this work appeared in several other towns in those parts the last autumn. And we have since been acquainted with something very remarkable of this nature at another parish in Stratford called Ripton; as also at a part of Guilford; at Mansfield; at Tolland; at Hebron; and at Bolton. There was also no small effusion of the Spirit of God in the north parish of Preston, in the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Lord, who, with the Rev. Mr. Owen of Grotten, came up hither in May, the last year, on purpose to see the work of God here; and having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, were careful to inform and satisfy themselves: To that end they particularly conversed with many of our people; which they declared to be entirely to their satisfaction; and that the "one half had not been told them." Mr. Lord told me that, when he got home, he informed his congregation of what he had seen, and that it proved the beginning of the same work amongst them, which prevailed till there was a general awakening, and many persons remarkably converted.

11. But this shower of divine blessing has been yet more extensive; there was no small degree of it in some parts of the Jerseys; as I was informed when I was at New-York, by some people of the Jerseys, whom I saw: Especially in a place called the Mountains, under the ministry of one Mr. Cross; in another place, under the ministry of Mr. Gilbert Tennent; and also at another place, under the ministry of a Dutch minister, whose name as I remember was Freelinghouse.

12. This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of Providence: God has in many respects gone beyond his usual, and ordinary way. The work in this town, and some others about us, has been extraordinary on account of the universality of it, effecting all sorts, sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise; it reacheth the most considerable families and persons, to all appearance, as much as others. In former stirrings

stirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people have been greatly affected, but old men and little children have been so now. Many of the last have of their own accord, formed themselves into religious societies, in different parts of the town: A loose careless person could scarcely find a companion in the whole neighbourhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain senseless or unconcerned, it was spoken of as a strange thing.

13. This dispensation has also appeared very extraordinary in the numbers of those, on whom we have reason to hope it has had a saving effect: We have now about six hundred and twenty communicants, which include almost all our adult persons. The church was very large before; but persons never thronged into it as they do at the present time.—Our Sacraments are eight weeks asunder, and I received into our communion about an hundred before one Sacrament, and fourscore of them at one time, whose appearance when they presented themselves together to make an open explicit profession of christianity, was very affecting to the congregation. I am far from pretending to determine how many have lately been the subject of such mercy; but if I may be allowed to declare what appears probable in a thing of this nature, I hope more than three hundred souls were brought home to Christ in this town, in the space of half a year, and about the same number of males as females; which, by what I have heard Mr. Stoddard say, has not been usual in years past, for he observed that in his time, many more women were converted than men. Those of our young people, that are on other accounts most considerable, are mostly, as I hope, truly pious. Those that were formerly looser, are generally to all appearance become true lovers of God and Christ. And I hope that by far the greatest part of persons in this town, above sixteen years of age, have the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and so by what I heard I suppose it is in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South-Hadley.

14. This

## WORK of GOD in NEW-ENGLAND. 9

14. This has also appeared to be a very extraordinary dispensation, in that the *Spirit of God* hath extended his influences both to elderly persons and those that are very young. It has been heretofore rarely heard that any were converted past middle age; but now we have the same ground to think, that many such have been savingly changed, as that others have been so in more early years. I suppose there were upwards of fifty persons in this town above forty years of age; and more than twenty of them above fifty, and about ten of them above sixty, and two of them above seventy years of age.

It has heretofore been looked on as strange when they have been savingly wrought upon in their childhood; but now, near thirty were to appearance so wrought upon between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one of about four years of age; and because I suppose this last will be most difficulty believed, I will hereafter give a particular account of it. There are several numerous families, in which, we have reason to hope that all the children are truly pious, and most of them lately become so: And there are very few houses in the whole town, into which salvation has not lately come, in one or more instances. There are several Negroes, that from what was seen in them then, and what is discernible in them since, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable season.

15. God has also seemed to go out of his usual way in the quickness of his work. It is wonderful that persons should be so suddenly and yet so greatly changed: Many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living, and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery, and in a very little time old things have passed away, and all things have become new with them.

16. God's work has also appeared very extraordinary in the degrees of the influences of his Spirit, both in the degrees of conviction, and of saving light, and love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in the extent of it, and its being so swiftly propagated.  
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from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town, though in some of them it was very remarkable, yet it reached no farther than this town, while the neighbouring towns all continued unmoved.

The work of God's Spirit seemed to be at its greatest height in this town, in the former part of the spring, in March and April; at which time it was carried on in so wonderful a manner, that so far as I can judge, there were, at least, four persons in a day converted to God, or near thirty in a week, take one with another for five or six weeks together: When God in so remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two, as at ordinary times, with all our endeavours, and with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year.

17. I am very sensible how apt many may be to think I am fond of magnifying and aggrandizing the matter; and that, for want of judgment, I take every religious pang, and enthusiastic conceit, for saving conversion. And for this reason I have forbore to publish an account of this great work, tho' I have often been put upon it; but having now as I judge a special call so to do, I thought it best to conceal no part of it, leaving it with God to take care of the credit of his own work: And that distant persons may be the better able to judge for themselves, I would be a little more large and particular.

18. I therefore proceed to give an account of the manner of persons being wrought upon; and here there is a vast variety, perhaps as manifold as the subjects of the operation; but yet in many things there is a great analogy in all.

Persons first are awakened into a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape. Those that before were secure and senseless, are made sensible they were in the way to ruin in their former courses. Some are more suddenly seized: It may be by the news of others conversion, or something



thing they hear in public, or in private conference, their consciences are suddenly smitten, as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart: Others have awakenings that come upon them more gradually, they begin at first to be something more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds, that it is their wisest way to improve the present opportunity, and have accordingly set themselves seriously to meditate, on purpose to obtain conviction; and so their awakenings have increased, till a sense of their misery has had fast hold of them. Others that before this time, had been something concerned for their salvation, have been made sensible that their slack and dull way of seeking was never like to attain their purpose, and to have been roused up to a greater violence for the kingdom of heaven.

19. These awakenings when they have first seized on persons have had two effects: One was, that they have brought them immediately to quit their sinful practices: When once the Spirit of God began to be so wonderfully poured out in a general way thro' the town, people had soon done with their old quarrels, backbitings, and intermeddling with other men's matters; persons kept much at home; none went abroad unless on necessary business, or on some religious account, and every day seemed in many respects like a sabbath-day.—The other effect was, that it put them to earnest application to the means of salvation, reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference; their cry was, "What shall we do to be saved?" The place of resort was now altered, it was no longer the tavern, but the minister's-house; that was thronged far more than ever the tavern had been wont to be.

20. There is a great variety, as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are in, before they obtain any comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance. Some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more hope: Some have had ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom yet the issue seems to be the same. Some have had  
such

such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at nights, and many have said that when they laid down, the thoughts of sleeping in such a condition have been frightful to them, and they have scarcely been free from terror while they were asleep, and have awaked with fear and distress still on their spirits: And often the concern that has been on their minds, has had a painful influence on their bodies, and given disturbance to animal nature.

21. The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery, have for the most part been increasing, as they have approached to deliverance; though they often pass through many changes, in the frame of their minds: Sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless, and fear that the Spirit of God has left them, and that they are given up to a judicial hardness; yet they appear very deeply troubled with that fear, and are in great earnest to obtain convictions again.

Together with those fears, and that exercise of mind which is rational, and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which satan probably has a great hand; and sometimes the distemper of melancholy has been evidently mixed: One knows not how to deal with such persons; they turn every thing that is said to them the wrong way; and there is nothing that the devil seems to make so great a handle of, unless it be the real corruption of the heart.

22. But it is remarkable, there has been far less of this mixture now than was wont to be in persons under awakenings at other times; yea, many that before had been exceedingly involved in such difficulties, seem now strangely to be set at liberty: some that had for a long time been entangled with peculiar temptations, of one sort or other, and unprofitable and hurtful distresses, were soon helped over them, and convictions have been successfully carried on in the way to life. And thus satan seemed

seemed to be restrained, till towards the latter end, when God's Spirit was about to withdraw.

Many under great awakenings were concerned, because they thought they were not more awakened, but sleeping upon the brink of hell: And the sense of the need they have to be awakened, grows upon them with their awakenings; so that they seem to themselves to be very senseless, when indeed most sensible. There have indeed been some instances of persons that have had as great a sense of their danger and misery, as their natures could well subsist under, and yet they have expressed themselves much amazed at their own insensibility and sottishness, in such an extraordinary time as it then was.

Persons are frequently brought to the borders of despair, a little before the day dawns in their souls: Some there have been who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin, that they have been overborne, and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth, and that he doth not immediately send them to hell. And sometimes their guilt does so glare them in the face, that they are in exceeding terror for fear that God will instantly do it. In others these terrors do not seem to be so sharp, when near comfort, as before; but they are led further into their own hearts, to a deeper sense of their own universal depravity and deadness in sin.

23. The corruption of the heart discovers itself various ways in the time of conviction; sometimes it appears in a great struggle, like something roused by an enemy, and Satan the old inhabitant seems to exert himself, like a Serpent disturbed and enraged. Many in such circumstances, have felt great envy towards those that are lately converted, and most of all towards their acquaintance and companions: Indeed some have felt many heart risings against God, and murmurings at his ways of dealing with mankind, and his dealings with themselves in particular. But it has been much insisted on, that persons should have the utmost dread of such thoughts, which tend exceedingly to quench the Spirit of God. And

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when such a spirit has much prevailed, and persons have not earnestly strove against it, it has seemed to be exceedingly to the hindrance of their souls: But in some other instances, where they have been much terrified at the sight of such wickedness in their hearts, God has brought good out of evil, and made it a means of convincing them of their own desperate sinfulness, and bringing them off from all self-confidence.

The drift of the Spirit of God herein has seemed evidently to be, to make way for a conviction of their absolute dependance on his sovereign power and grace and the necessity of a Mediator, by leading them more and more to a sense of their exceeding wickedness, and guiltiness in his sight; and of the pollution, and insufficiency of their own righteousness; to shew them that they can in no wise help themselves, and that God would be wholly just in rejecting them, and all that they do, and in casting them off for ever: Though there be a vast variety, as to the manner and distinctness of persons convictions of these things.

As they are more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts, they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and blinder, and more desperately wicked, instead of growing better. Under the sense which the Spirit of God gives them of their sinfulness, they often think that they differ from all others; their hearts are ready to sink with the thoughts, that they are the worst of all, and that none ever obtained mercy that were so wicked as they.

At first, their consciences are commonly most exercised about their outward vicious course, or other acts of sin; but afterwards they are more burthened with a sense of heart-sins, the dreadful corruption of their nature, their enmity against God, the pride of their hearts, their unbelief, their rejection of Christ, the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills; and the like. In many, God makes much use of their own experience, in the course of their awakenings and endeavours after saving good, to convince



convince them of their own vile emptiness and universal depravity.

24. Very often under the first awakenings, when they are brought to reflect on their past lives, and have a terrifying sense of God's anger, they set themselves to walk more strictly, and confess their sins, and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger and making up for the sins they have committed: And oftentimes, at first setting out, their affections are moved and they are full of tears in their confessions and prayers, which they are ready to make very much of, as though they were some atonement, and had power to move correspondent affections in God too: and hence they are for a while big with expectation of what God will do for them; and conceive that they grow better apace, and shall soon be thoroughly converted. But these affections are but short-lived, they quickly find that they fail, and then they think themselves to be grown worse again; they do not find such a prospect of being soon converted as they thought; instead of being nearer, they seem to be farther off; their hearts they think are grown harder, and by this means their fears of perishing greatly increase. But tho' they are disappointed, they renew their attempts again and again; and still as their attempts are multiplied, so are their disappointments; all fails, they see no token of having inclined God's heart to them, they do not see that he hears their prayers at all, as they expected he would; and sometimes there have been great temptations arising hence to leave off seeking, and to yield up the case. And as they are still more terrified with fears of perishing, and their hopes of prevailing on God in a great measure fail, sometimes their religious affections have turned into heart-risings against God, because that he would not pity them, and seemed to have little regard to their distress, and to all the pains they take. They think how soon others have obtained comfort, and those too that were worse than they, and have not laboured so much as they have done, and sometimes fall into dreadful blasphemous thoughts. When

they reflect on those wicked workings of a heart against God, they have still more distressing apprehensions of his anger, and it may be fear they have committed the unpardonable sin, and that God will surely now never shew mercy to them.

25. But then perhaps by something they read or hear of the infinite mercy of God, and all-sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners; they have some hope renewed; but think that as yet they are not fit to come to Christ: And then set themselves upon a new course of endeavours to make themselves better, and still meet with new disappointments: They are earnest to enquire what they shall do? They do not know but there is something else to be done, in order to their obtaining converting grace, that they have never done yet. It may be they hope that they are something better than they were; but the pleasing dream soon vanishes again. They find not yet the appearance of any good, but all looks as dark as midnight to them. Thus they wander about from mountain to hill, seeking rest, and finding none: When they are beat out of one refuge they fly to another, till being broken and subdued, God gives them a conviction of their own utter helplessness and insufficiency, and discovers the true remedy, a knowledge of Christ and his gospel.

Men that begin to seek salvation are commonly profoundly ignorant of themselves; they are not sensible how blind they are, and how little they can do towards bringing themselves to see spiritual things aright; they are not sensible how remote they are from the love of God, and all other holy dispositions. When they see unexpected pollution in their own hearts, they go about to wash away their own defilements, and make themselves clean; and they weary themselves in vain, till God shows them it is in vain, and that their help is not where they have sought it, but elsewhere.

But some continue wandering in a kind of labyrinth, ten times as long as others, before their own experience will convince them of their insufficiency; and so it appears not to be their own experience

perience only, but the influence of God's Spirit: And God has of late abundantly shown that he does not need to wait to have men convinced by long and often repeated fruitless trials; for in multitudes of instances he has made a shorter work: he has so convinced persons, and made them so sensible of their exceeding great vileness, and given them such a sense of his wrath against sin, as has quickly overcome all their vain self-confidence and born them down into the dust before a holy and righteous God.

26. There have been some who have not had great terrors, but have had a very quick work. Some of those that have not had so deep a conviction before, have, it may be, much more of it after conversion. God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method in his proceedings with sinners under convictions. In some instances it seems easy for our reasoning powers to discern the methods of divine wisdom herein: In others his footsteps cannot be traced, and his ways are past finding out: And some that are less distinctly wrought upon, in what is preparatory to grace, appear no less eminent afterwards.

There is in nothing a greater difference, in different persons, than with respect to the time of their being under trouble; some but a few days, and others for months or years. There were many in this town, that had been, before this effusion of God's Spirit upon us, for years, and some for many years, concerned about their salvation; and to such a degree as to be very uneasy, to live an uncomfortable disquieted life, without any evidence of a good estate, who now have received light; but many of them were some of the last: They first saw multitudes of others rejoicing, and with songs of deliverance in their mouths, who seemed wholly careless and at ease, and in pursuit of vanity, while they had been bowed down with solicitude about their souls; yea, some had lived licentiously, and so continued till a little before they were converted, and grew up to a holy rejoicing in the infinite blessings God had bestowed upon them.



27. And whatever minister has a like occasion to deal with souls, in a flock under such circumstances, he will soon find himself under a necessity greatly to insist upon it with them, that God is under no manner of obligation to shew them mercy: and that a man can challenge nothing in *justice* from any thing he does before he has believed on *Jesus Christ*. It appears to me, that if I had taught those under trouble, any other doctrine, I should have taken the direct course to have undone them; I should have directly crossed what was plainly the drift of the Spirit of God in his influences upon them; for if they had believed what I said, it would either have promoted carelessness, and so put an end to their awakenings; or blocked up their way to that humiliation before the sovereign disposer of life and death, whereby God is wont to prepare us for his consolations: And I have found no discourses more remarkably blessed, than those in which the doctrine of God's just liberty, with regard to answering the prayers, or succeeding the pains of meer natural men, continuing such, have been insisted on. I never found so much immediate fruit, of any discourses I have preached, as of some from those words, "That every mouth may be stopped;" Rom. iii. 19. Endeavouring to shew from thence, that it would be just with God were he to cast us off for ever.

28. Commonly the first thing that appears after men have been much awakened, is a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, in a sense of their own exceeding sinfulness, and the vileness of all their performances: in giving an account of this, they expressed themselves very variously; some, that they saw that God was sovereign, and might receive others and reject them; some that they were convinced, that God might justly bestow mercy on every person in the world, and damn themselves to all eternity; some that they see that God may justly have no regard to all the pains they have taken, and all the prayers they have made; some, that they see that if they should seek, and take the utmost pains all their lives, God might justly cast them into hell

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at last, because all their labours, prayers and tears cannot make an atonement for the least sin, nor merit any blessing at the hands of God; some have declared themselves to be in the hands of God, that he can, and may, dispose of them just as he pleases; some, that God may glorify himself in their damnation, and they wonder that God has suffered them to live so long; and has not cast them into hell long ago.

Some are brought to this conviction by a great sense of their sinfulness, in general, that they are such vile wicked creatures in heart and life: others have the sins of their lives in an extraordinary manner set before them, multitudes of them coming just then fresh to their memory, and being set before them with their aggravations. Some have their minds especially fixed on some particular wicked practice, they have indulged; others on the corruption of their hearts. Some are deeply convinced by a view they have of the horridness of some particular exercises of corruption, in the time of their awakening, whereby the enmity of the heart against God has been manifested; and others by a sense of the sin of unbelief, the opposition of their hearts to the way of Salvation by Christ, and their obstinacy in rejecting him and his grace.

29. There is a great deal of difference as to persons distinctness here; some have not so clear a sight of God's justice in their condemnation; but yet mention things that plainly imply it. They acknowledge God to be just in his threatnings, and that they are deserving of nothing: And many times, tho' they had not a sight of it at the beginning, they have very clear discoveries of it afterwards, with great humblings in the dust before God.

Commonly persons' minds immediately before this discovery of God's justice are exceeding restless, and in a kind of struggle and tumult, and sometimes in meer anguish; but generally, as soon as they have this conviction, it brings their minds to a calm composure. And most frequently, tho' not always, then the pressing weight upon their spirits is taken away, and a general hope arises, that some time or  
other

other God will be gracious, even before they have any distinct discoveries of mercy. And often they then come to a conclusion within themselves, that they will lie at God's feet, and wait his time.

30. In many, the first conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, which they take particular notice of, and probably the first distinct conviction of it that they have, does not appear to be forced by mere terrors and convictions, for there is in it a sort of complacency of soul, in the attribute of God's justice, as displayed in his threatnings of eternal damnation to sinners. Sometimes at the discovery of it, they can scarce forbear crying out, *It is just! it is just!* Some express themselves, that they see the Glory of God would *shine bright* in their own condemnation; and they are ready to think that if they are damned, they could take part with God against themselves, and glorify his justice therein. And when it is thus, they commonly have some evident sense of free and all-sufficient grace, tho' they give no distinct account of it, but it is manifest, by that degree of hope and encouragement that they then conceive, tho' they were never so sensible of their own vileness.

Some, when in such circumstances, have felt that sense of the excellency of God's justice, against such sinfulness as theirs was, and have had such a submission of mind together with an exceeding loathing of their own unworthiness, and a kind of indignation against themselves, that they have called it a *willingness to be damned*; tho' it must be owned they had not clear ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the Bible require such self-denial as this. But the truth is, as some have more clearly expressed it, "Salvation appeared too good for them; they were worthy of nothing but condemnation, and they could not tell how to think of salvation's being bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the Glory of God's Majesty, which they had so much contemned and affronted."

31. That calmness of spirit which some have found after their distress, continued some time before any special manifestation of the favour of God. But in others

others, often the comfortable view of a merciful God and a sufficient Redeemer, immediately followed. And in several, the first sight of their just desert of hell, and of God's love were so near, they seemed to go together.

These gracious discoveries are in many respects very various; more frequently Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners: But some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his glorious attributes manifested in the gospel, and shining forth in the face of Christ: Some view the all-sufficiency of the mercy and grace of God; some chiefly the infinite power of God, and his ability to save them, and to do all things for them; and some look most at the truth and faithfulness of God. In some, the truth and certainty of the gospel in general is the first joyful discovery they have; in others, the certain truth of some particular promises; in some, the grace and sincerity of God in his invitations, very commonly in some particular invitation. Some are struck with the glory and wonderfulness of the dying love of Christ; and some with the sufficiency and preciousness of his blood, as offered to make an atonement for sin; and others with the value and glory of his obedience and righteousness. In some, the excellency and loveliness of Christ chiefly engages their thoughts; in some his divinity, and he is indeed "the Son of the living God;" and in others, the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.

Some have an apprehension of these things so given, that it seems more natural to them to express it by *sight* or *discovery*; others think what they experience better expressed by the *realizing conviction*, or a *lively feeling sense of heart*; meaning, as I suppose, no other difference but what is merely circumstantial or gradual.

There is, often, in the mind, some particular text of Scripture, giving them consolation; sometimes a multitude of texts, gracious invitations and promises flowing in one after another, filling the soul more  
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and more with comfort. Comfort is first given to some while reading a portion of scripture; but in others it is attended with no particular scripture at all, either in reading or meditation. In some, many divine things seem to be discovered to the soul as it were at once; others have their minds especially fixed on some one thing at first, and afterwards a sense is given of others; in some with a swifter, and others a slower succession, and sometimes with interruptions of much darkness.

32. The way that grace seems sometimes first to appear after deep humiliation, is in earnest longings of soul after God and Christ, to know God, to love him, to be humbled before him; which arise from a sense of the superlative excellency of divine things, with a spiritual taste and relish of them. Such longings are commonly attended with firm resolutions to pursue this good for ever, together with a hoping, waiting disposition. Other experiences and discoveries soon follow, which more clearly manifest a change of heart.

It must be confessed that Christ is not always distinctly and explicitly thought of at first (tho' most commonly he is) but only implicitly. Thus sometimes when persons have seemed evidently to be stripped of all their own righteousness, and to have stood self-condemned as guilty of death, they have been comforted with a joyful view, that the mercy and Grace of God is sufficient for them; that their sins, tho' never so great, shall be no hindrance to their being accepted; that there is mercy enough in God for the whole world, and the like, when they gave no account of any distinct thought of Christ; but yet it appears that the revelation of the mercy of God in the gospel, is the ground of this their hope; and that it is indeed the mercy of God thro' Christ, that is discovered to them.

So sometimes disconsolate souls amongst us, have been brought to rest in God, by a sweet sense of his grace and faithfulness, in some special invitation or promise, in which is no particular mention of Christ nor is it accompanied with any distinct thought of him in their minds; but yet it is not received as out

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of Christ, but as one of the invitations or promises made of God to poor sinners thro' his Son Jesus, as it is indeed: And such persons have afterwards had clear and distinct discoveries of Christ, accompanied with lively faith and love towards him.

33. Frequently when persons have first had the gospel-ground of relief for lost sinners discovered to them, they have thought nothing at that time of their being converted, only to see that there is such an all sufficiency in God, and such plentiful provision made in Christ, after they have been borne down, with a sense of their guilt and fears of wrath, exceedingly refreshes them; the view is joyful to them, as it is in its own nature glorious, and gives them quite new, and more delightful ideas of God and Christ, and begets in them a strong resolution to give up themselves, to God and his Son, and patiently to wait for him.

34. It was very wonderful to see after what manner persons affections were sometimes moved when God suddenly opened their eyes, and let into their minds, a sense of the greatness of his grace, and fulness of Christ, and his readiness to save. Their joyful surprize has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping: and sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration.

These influences of God's Spirit commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the reality and certainty of the great things of religion (tho' in some this is much greater, some time after than at first) they have a sight and taste of the divine excellency, that there is in the things of the gospel, which is more to convince them, than reading many volumes of arguments without it. It seems to me that in many instances when the glory of the things of christianity have been set before persons, and they have at the same time seen, and tasted, and felt the divinity of them, they have been as far from doubting of the truth of them, as they are from doubting whether

whether there be a sun, when their eyes are open in the midst of a clear hemisphere, and the strong blaze of his light overcomes all objections against his being. And yet many of them, if one should ask why they believed those things to be true, would not be able to satisfy the enquirer, and perhaps would make no other answer but that they see them to be true: but a person may soon be satisfied, by a particular conversation with them, that what they mean by such an answer, is, that they have intuitively beheld, and immediately felt, most powerful evidence of divinity in them.

35. Some are thus convinced of the truth of the gospel in general, and that the Scriptures are the word of God: Others have their minds more especially fixed on some great doctrine of the gospel, some particular truths that they are meditating on; or are in a special manner convinced of the divinity of the things they are reading of, in some portion of scripture. Some have such convictions in a much more remarkable manner than others. And some that never had a special sense of the certainty of divine things impressed upon them with such inward evidence, have yet very clear exercises of grace. i. e. of love to God, repentance and holiness. And if they be more particularly examined, they appear plainly to have a firm persuasion of the reality of divine things, such as they had not before. But those that have the most clear discoveries of divine truth, have them not always in the same degree. In a dull frame, things appear dim to what they did before: And tho' there still remains an habitual strong persuasion, yet not so as to exclude temptations to unbelief, and all possibility of doubting: as before: But then at particular times, by God's help, the sense of things revives, like fire that lay hid in ashes.

36. I suppose the grounds of such a conviction of the truth of divine things to be just and rational, but yet in some God makes use of their own reason much more sensibly than in others. Oftentimes persons have (so far as could be judged) received the first saving conviction from reasoning, which  
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they have heard from the pulpit; and often in the course of reasoning, which they are led into in their own meditations.

The arguments are the same that they have heard hundreds of times; but the force of the arguments, and their conviction by them, is altogether new; they come with a new and before unexperienced power: Before they heard it was so, and they allowed it to be so; but now they see it to be so indeed. Things now look exceeding plain to them, and they wonder that they did not see them before.

They are so greatly taken with their new discovery, and things appear so plain and so rational to them, that they are often at first ready to think they can convince all men, and are apt to engage in talk with every one they meet with, almost to this end; and when they are disappointed, are ready to wonder that their reasonings make no more impression.

37. They often speak of things of religion as seeming new to them; that preaching is a new thing; that it seems to them they never heard preaching before; that the Bible is a new book: because they see them in a new light. Here was a remarkable instance of an aged woman of above seventy years, who reading in the New-Testament, concerning Christ's sufferings for sinners, seemed to be astonished at what she read, as at a thing that was quite new to her, insomuch that at first, before she had time to turn her thoughts, she wondered within herself she had never heard of it before, but then immediately recollected that she had often heard of it, and read it, but never till now saw it as a thing real; and then cast in her mind, how wonderful this was, that the Son of God should undergo such things for sinners, and how she had spent her time in ungrateful sinning against so good a God, and such a Saviour; tho' she was a person, as to what was visible, of a very blameless and inoffensive life. And she was so overcome by those considerations, that her nature was ready to fail. Those that were about her, and knew not what was the matter, were surprized, and thought she was a dying.

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38. Many



38. Many have spoken much of their hearts being drawn out in love to God and Christ, and their minds being wrapt up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful Grace of God, and the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, and of their souls going forth in longing desires *after God and Christ*. Several of our young children have expressed much of this, and have manifested a willingness to leave father and mother, and all things in the world, to go to be with Christ. Some persons have had such desires after Christ, as to take away their natural strength. Some have been so overcome with a sense of his love to such poor, wretched, and unworthy creatures, as to weaken the body. Several persons have had so great a sense of the Glory of God, and excellency of Christ, that nature and life have seemed almost to sink under it; and in all probability, if God had shewed them a little more of himself, it would have dissolved their frame. And their sense of their own exceeding littleness and vileness, has been in proportion to their light and joy.

Such persons have commonly appeared with none of the assuming, and self-conceited, and self-sufficient, airs of enthusiasts, but exceedingly the contrary; being eminent for meekness, modesty, self-diffidence, and a low opinion of themselves: None are so sensible of their need of instruction, and so eager to receive it, as some of them: Nor so ready to think others better than themselves. And generally they have manifested a longing to lie low, and in the dust before God; withal complaining of their not being able to lie low enough.

They speak much of the inexpressibleness of what they experience, how their words fail, so that they can in no wise declare it: Of the superlative excellency of that delight of soul, which they sometimes enjoy; how a little of it is sufficient to pay them for all the pains and trouble they have gone thro' in seeking salvation: And of the sense which these spiritual views give them of the vanity of earthly enjoyments, how mean and worthless all these things appear to them.

39. Many



39. Many, while their minds have been filled with spiritual delights, have as it were forgot their food; their bodily appetite has failed, while their minds have been entertained with "meat to eat that others knew not of." And the light and comfort they enjoy, gives a new relish to their common blessings, and cause all things about them to appear beautiful, sweet and pleasant to them: All things abroad, the sun, moon and stars, the clouds and sky, the heavens and earth, appear as it were with a cast of divine glory and sweetness upon them. But the supreme attention of their minds is to the glorious excellencies of God and Christ, which they have in view; a ravishing sense of God's love accompanying a sense of his excellency; and of the faithfulness of God's promises, as they respect the future eternal enjoyment of God.

The joy that many of them speak of as that, to which none is to be paralleled; is that which they find when they are lowest in the dust, emptied most of themselves, and as it were annihilating themselves before God, when they are nothing, and God is all, are seeing their own unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves, but alone on Christ, and ascribing all glory to God: Then their souls are most in the enjoyment of satisfying rest; excepting that, as such times, they apprehend themselves to be not sufficiently self-abased; for then above all times do they long to be lower. Some speak much of the exquisite sweetness, and rest of soul that is to be found in resignation to God, and humble submission to his Will. Many express earnest longings to praise God; but at the same time complain they cannot praise him as they would do, and they want to have others help them in praising him: They want to have every one praise God, and are ready to call upon every thing to praise him. They express a longing desire to live to God's Glory, and to do something to his honour; but at the same time cry out of their insufficiency and barrenness, that they *poor impotent creatures, can do nothing of themselves, and are utterly insufficient to glorify their Creator and Redeemer.*

40. While God was so remarkably present amongst us by his Spirit, there was no book so delighted in as the Bible; especially the Book of Psalms, the Prophecy of Isaiah, and the New-Testament. Some by reason of their esteem and love to God's Word, have at some times been greatly and wonderfully affected at the sight of a Bible: And then also, there was no time so prized as the Lord's-day, and no place in this world so desired as God's house. Our converts remarkably appeared united in dear affection to one another, and many have expressed much of that love which they felt to all mankind; and particularly to those that had been least friendly to them. Never, I believe, was so much done in confessing injuries, and making up differences as the last year. Persons after their own conversion have commonly expressed an exceeding desire for the conversion of others: some have thought that they should be willing to die for the conversion of any soul, tho' of one of the meanest of their fellow-creatures, or of their worst enemies; and many have indeed been in great distress with desires and longings for it. This Work of God had also a good effect to unite the people's affections to their minister.

There are some persons that I have been acquainted with, but more especially two, that have been swallowed up exceedingly with a sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God; and both of them told me to this purpose, that if they in the time of it, had had the least fear that they were not at peace with this so great a God, they should instantly have died.

41. But there is an endless variety in the particular manner and circumstances in which persons are wrought on, and an opportunity of seeing so much of such a Work of God, will shew that God is further from confining himself to certain steps, and a particular method in his work on souls, than some imagine. I believe it has occasioned some amongst us, that were before too ready to make their own experience a rule to others, to be less censorious, and this is an excellent advantage indeed;

deed: that this variety has both displayed the manifoldness and unsearchableness of the wisdom of God, and wrought more *Charity* amongst his people.

42. I think the main ground of doubts and fears in persons, after their conversion, has been that they have found so much corruption remaining in their hearts. At first their souls are alive, their hearts are fixed, and their affections flowing; they live above the world, and meet with but little difficulty in religious exercises. And they are ready to think it will always be so: tho' they are truly abased under a sense of their vileness, by reason of former sin, yet they are not then sufficiently sensible what corruption still remains in their hearts; and therefore are surprized when they find that they begin to be dull and dead, to be troubled with wandering thoughts in the time of public and private worship; and to be utterly unable to keep themselves from them; also when they find themselves unaffected at seasons in which they think there is the greatest occasion to be affected; and when they feel worldly dispositions working in them, and it may be pride, envy, or stirrings of revenge; their hearts are almost sunk with the disappointment; and they are ready presently to think that all this they have met with is nothing, and that they are mere hypocrites.

They are ready to argue, that if God had indeed done such great things for them, such ingratitude would be inconsistent with it: they cry out of the hardness and wickedness of their hearts; and say there is so much corruption, that it seems to them *impossible that there should be any goodness* there: and many of them seem to be more sensible how corrupt their hearts are, than ever they were before they had faith. But in truth, the case is, that now they feel the pain of their own wounds; they have a watchful eye upon their hearts that they did not use to have: they take more notice of what sin is there, and sin is now far more burthensome to them, they strive more against it, and feel more of the strength of it.



They are surprized that they should find themselves so different from the idea that they generally had entertained of believers; for tho' faith be indeed of a far more excellent nature than they imagined: yet those that believe have much more remaining corruption, than they thought. They never realized it, that persons were wont to meet with difficulties, after they were once converted. But on a return of the influences of the Spirit of God, the light breaks thro' the cloud, and doubting and darkness vanish away.

Persons are often revived by religious conversation: while they are talking of divine things, or ever they are aware, their souls are carried away into holy exercises with abundant pleasure. And often while they are relating their past experiences, the same experiences are renewed. Sometimes they have Scriptures, one after another, coming to their minds, to answer their scruples and unravel their difficulties, exceeding apposite and proper to their circumstances, by which means their darkness is scattered; and often before any new remarkable comforts, especially after a long continued deadness, there are renewed humblings, in a great sense of their own exceeding vileness and unworthiness, as before their first comforts were bestowed.

43. Many in the country have entertained a mean thought of this great Work, from what they have heard of impressions made on persons imaginations. But there have been exceeding great misrepresentations and innumerable false reports concerning that matter. It is not, that I know of, the opinion of any one person in the town, that any weight is to be laid on any thing seen with the bodily eye: I know the contrary to be a received and established principle amongst us. I cannot say that there have been no instances of persons that have been ready to give too much heed to useless imagination, but they have been easily corrected, and it will not be wondered at, that a congregation should need a guide in such cases, to assist them in distinguishing wheat from chaff. But such impressions on the imagination as have been more usual, seem to me to be  
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no other, than what is to be expected in human nature in such circumstances, and what is the natural result of impressions on the heart.

I do not suppose that they themselves imagined that they saw any thing with their bodily eyes; but only have had within them ideas strongly impressed, and as it were, lively pictures in their minds: as for instance, some when in great terrors, thro' fear of hell, have had lively ideas of a dreadful furnace. When some were greatly moved with a sense of the excellency of CHRIST, together with a sense of his glorious spiritual perfections, there has risen in the mind an idea of one of glorious Majesty, and of a sweet and gracious aspect: and some when greatly affected with CHRIST's death, had at the same time a lively idea of CHRIST hanging upon the cross, and of his blood running from his wounds; which things will not be wondered at by them that have observed how strong affections about temporal matters will excite lively ideas of different things in the mind.

There have indeed been some few instances, of impressions on person's imaginations, that have been mysterious to me, and I have been at a loss about them; for tho' it has been exceeding evident to me by many things that appeared in them, both then (when they related them) and afterwards, that they indeed had a great sense of the spiritual excellency of divine things accompanying them; yet I have not been able well to satisfy myself, whether their imaginary ideas have been more than could naturally arise from the spiritual sense of things. However, I have used the utmost caution in such cases; and great care has been taken both in public and in private, to teach persons the difference between what is spiritual and what is imaginary. I have often warned persons not to lay the stress of their hope on any ideas of any outward glory, or any external thing whatsoever, and have met with no opposition in such instructions. But it is not strange if some weaker persons, in giving an account of their experiences, have not so prudently distinguished between the spiritual and imaginary part; which

which those that have not been well affected to Religion, might take advantage of.

44. But to give a clearer idea of the nature and manner of the operations of God's Spirit in this wonderful effusion of it, I would give an account of two particular instances. The first is an adult person, a young woman, whose name was Abigail Hutchinson. I pitch upon her especially, because she is now dead, and so it may be more fit to speak freely of her than of living instances; tho' I am under far greater disadvantages, on other accounts, to give a full and clear narrative of her experiences, nor can any account be given but what has been retained in the memories of her near friends and some others, of what they have heard her express in her life-time.

She was of a rational, understanding family; there could be nothing in her education that tended to Enthusiasm, but rather to the contrary extreme. She was before her conversion, to the observation of her neighbours, of a sober and inoffensive conversation; and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She had long been infirm of body, but her infirmity had never been observed at all to incline her to be notional or fanciful, or to occasion any thing of religious melancholy. She was under awakenings scarcely a week, before there seemed to be plain evidence of her being savingly changed.

She was first awakened in the Winter, on a Monday, by something she heard her brother say of the necessity of being in good earnest in seeking Christ, together with the news of the conversion of another young woman. This news wrought much upon her, and stirred up a spirit of envy in her towards this young woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a mercy; but withal it engaged her in a firm resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same blessing, and considering with herself what course she should take, she thought she had not a sufficient knowledge of the principles of religion: whereupon she resolved thoroughly to search the Scriptures; and accordingly immediately began at the beginning of the Bible, intending

intending to read it through: She continued thus till Thursday, and then there was a sudden alteration by a great increase of her concern in an extraordinary sense of her own sinfulness, particularly the sinfulness of her nature and wickedness of her heart, which came upon her (as she expressed it) as a flash of lightning, and struck her into an exceeding terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible in course as she had begun, and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could find some relief for her distressed soul.

45. Her "great terror, she said, was, she had sinned against God:" her distress grew more and more for three days; until (as she said) she saw "nothing but blackness of darkness before her, and "her very flesh trembled for fear of God's wrath. "She wondered and was astonished at herself, that "she had been so concerned for her body, and had "applied so often to Physicians to heal that, and had "neglected her soul." Her sinfulness appeared with a very awful aspect to her, especially in three things, viz. her original sin, her sin of murmuring at God's Providence, in the weakness she had been under, and in want of duty to her parents, tho' others had looked upon her to excel in dutifulness. On Saturday, she was so earnestly engaged in reading the Bible and other books, that she continued in it, searching for something to relieve her, till her eyes was so dim, that she could not know the letters. Whilst she was thus engaged in reading, prayer, and other religious exercises, she thought of these words of Christ, wherein he warns us not to be *as the Heathen, that think they shall be heard for their much speaking*; which, she said, led her to see that she had trusted to her own prayers and religious performances, and now she was put to a nonplus, and knew not which way to turn herself, or where to seek relief.

While her mind was in this posture, her heart, she said, seemed to fly to the minister for refuge, hoping that he could give her some relief. She came the same day to her brother, with the countenance of a person in distress, expostulating with him,



him, why he had not told her more of her sinfulness, and earnestly enquiring of him what she should do. She seemed that day to feel in herself an enmity against the Bible, which greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday; and she gave this account of it, that it had been an opinion, which till now she had entertained, that she was not guilty of Adam's sin; but that now she saw she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it: and that the sin which she brought into the world with her, was alone sufficient to condemn her.

46. On the Sabbath-day she was so ill that her friends thought it not best that she should go to public worship, of which she seemed very desirous: but when she went to bed on the Sabbath-day night, she took up a resolution that she would the next morning go to the Minister. As she awaked on Monday morning, a little before day, she wondered within herself at the calm she felt in her mind, which was of that kind which she never felt before. As she thought of this, such words as these were in her mind; "The words of the Lord are pure words, health to the soul, and marrow to the bones;" and then these words, "the blood of Christ cleanse from all sin;" which were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and his sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. She then thought of that expression, *It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun*; which words then seemed to her to be very applicable to JESUS CHRIST. By these things her mind was exceeding full of joy. She told her brother in the morning, "that she had seen (i. e. by faith) Christ the last night, and that she had really thought that she had not knowledge enough to be converted;" but, says she, "God can make it quite easy!" On Monday she felt all day a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together, that she had on Monday morning, and much in the same manner, at each time, waking a little before day; but brighter and brighter every time.



47. At the last time on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fulness, her soul was filled with distress for unbelievers, to consider what a miserable condition they were in: and she felt in herself a strong inclination immediately to go forth to warn sinners; and proposed it the next day to her brother to assist her in going from house to house; but her brother restrained her, telling her of the unsuitableness of such a method. She told one of her sisters that day, that she loved *all mankind, but especially the people of God*. Her sister asked her why she loved all mankind? She replied, *because God hath made them*. After this, there happened to come into the shop where she was at work, three persons that were thought to be lately converted. Her seeing them as they stepped in, so drew forth her love to them, that it overcame her, and she almost fainted: and when they began to talk of the things of religion, it was more than she could bear; they were obliged to cease on that account. It was a very frequent thing with her to be overcome with a flow of affection to them that she thought godly, in conversation with them, and sometimes only at the sight of them.

48. She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ; sometimes in some particular attributes, and sometimes in many. She gave an account that once, as those four words passed thro' her mind, WISDOM, JUSTICE, GOODNESS and TRUTH, her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially the last; TRUTH, said she, *sunk the deepest!* and therefore as these words passed, this was repeated, TRUTH, TRUTH! her mind was so swallowed up with a sense of the glory of God's Truth, and other perfections, that she said, "it seemed as tho' her life was going, and that she saw it was easy with God to take away her life by discoveries of himself." Soon after this she went to a private religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time; and when the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning

cerning what she had experienced : and she began to give them an account ; but as she was relating it, she received such a sense of the same things, that her strength failed ; and they were obliged to take her, and lay her upon the bed. Afterwards she was greatly affected, and rejoiced with these words, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain ! "

49. She had several days together a sweet sense of the loveliness of Christ in his meekness, which disposed her continually to be repeating over these words, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART. She once expressed herself to one of her sisters, to this purpose, that she had continued *whole days and whole nights*, in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, *having enjoyed as much as her life could bear*. Once as her brother was speaking of the dying love of Christ, she told him that she had such a sense of it, that the mere mentioning it was ready to overcome her.

Once, when she came to me, she told how at such and such a time she thought she saw as much of God, and had as much joy and pleasure as was possible in this life, and that yet afterwards God discovered himself far more abundantly, and she saw the same things more clearly and in another, and far more excellent and delightful manner, and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness. She likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had from day to day of the glory of Christ and of God, in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together in a kind of *beatific vision* of God ; and seemed to have as immediate intercourse with him, as a child with a father : and at the same time, she appeared most remote from any high thought of herself, and of her own sufficiency ; but was like a little child, and expressed a great desire to be instructed, telling them that she longed very often to come to me for instruction, and wanted to live at my house, that I might tell her her duty.

50. She often expressed a sense of the glory of God appearing in the trees, and growth of the fields, and other works of God's hands. She told her sister that lived near the heart of the town, that she  
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once thought it a pleasant thing to live in the middle of the town, *but now*, says she, "*I think it much more pleasant to sit and see the wind blowing the trees, and to behold in the country what God has made.*" She had sometimes the powerful breathings of the Spirit of God on her soul, while reading the Scripture, and would express a sense that she had of the certain Truth and Divinity thereof. She sometimes would appear with a pleasant smile on her countenance; and when her sister took notice of it, and asked why she smiled, she replied, "I am brim-full of a *sweet feeling within!*" She often used to express how "good and sweet it was to lie low before God, *and the lower (says she) the better!*" And that it was "pleasant to think of lying in the dust, all the *days of her life, mourning for sin.*" She was wont to manifest a great sense of her own meanness and dependance. She often expressed an exceeding compassion, and pitiful love, which she found in her heart towards persons that knew not Christ; which was sometimes so strong, that as she was passing by such in the streets, or those that she feared were such, she would be overcome by the sight of them. She once said, that she *longed to have the world saved*, she wanted, as it were, *to pull them all to her; she could not bear to have one lost.*

51. She had great longings to die, that she might be with Christ; which increased till she thought she did not know how to be patient to wait till God's time should come. But once when she felt those longings, she thought with herself, "If I long to die, why do I go to Physicians?" Whence she concluded that her longings for death were not well regulated. After this she often put it to herself, which she should chuse, whether to live or to die, to be sick or to be well, and she found she could not tell, till at last she found herself disposed to say these words, "I am quite willing to live, and quite *willing to die; quite willing to be sick, and quite willing to be well; and quite willing for any thing that God will bring upon me!* And then, *said she, I felt myself perfectly easy, in a full submission to the will of God.*" She then la-



mented much, that she had been so eager in her longings for death, as it argued want of resignation to God. She seemed henceforward to continue in this resigned frame till death.

52. After this her illness increased upon her: and once after having spent the greater part of the night in extreme pain, she awaked out of a little sleep with these words in her heart and mouth; "I am willing to suffer for Christ's sake, I am willing to spend and be spent for Christ's sake, I am willing to spend my life, even my very life for Christ's sake!" And tho' she had an extraordinary resignation, with respect to life or death, yet the thoughts of death were exceeding sweet to her. At a time when her brother was reading in Job, concerning worms feeding on the dead body, she appeared with a pleasant smile, and being enquired of about it, she said, it was sweet to her to think of her being in such circumstances. At another time, when her brother mentioned the danger there seemed to be, that the illness she then laboured under, might be an occasion of her death, it filled her with joy that almost overcame her. At another time, when she met a company following a corpse to the grave, she said, it was sweet to her to think, that they would in a little time follow her in like manner.

53. Her illness in the latter part of it was seated much in her throat; and swelling inwardly, filled up the pipe, so that she could swallow nothing but what was perfectly liquid, and but very little of that, and with great and long strugglings and stranglings, that which she took in, flying out at her nostrils, till she at last could swallow nothing at all. She had a raging appetite to food, so that she told her sister, when talking with her about her circumstances, that the worst bit she threw to her swine would be sweet to her; but when she saw that she could not swallow it, she seemed to be perfectly contented without it, as if she had no appetite to it. Others were greatly moved to see what she underwent, and were filled with admiration at her unexampled patience. At a time when she was striving in vain to get down a little food, something liquid,  
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and was very much spent with it; she looked upon her sister with a smile, saying, "O sister, this is for my good!" At another time, when her sister was speaking of what she underwent, she told her, that she lived a heaven upon earth for all that. She used sometimes to say to her sister, under her extreme sufferings, "It is good to be so!" Her sister once asked her, why she said so, "Why, said she, because God would have it so: it is best that things should be as God would have them: It looks best to me." After her confinement, as they were leading her from the bed to the door, she seemed overcome by the sight of things abroad, as shewing forth the glory of the Being that made them. As she lay on her death-bed, she would often say these words, "God is my Friend!" And once looking upon her sister, with a smile, said, "O Sister! how good it is! how sweet and comfortable it is to consider, and think of heavenly things!"

She expressed on her death-bed an exceeding longing, both for persons in a natural state, that they might be converted, and for believers that they might see and know more of God. And when those that looked upon themselves as unbelievers came to see her, she would be greatly moved with compassionate affection. The same week that she died, when she was in distressing circumstances as to her body, some of the neighbours that came to see her, asked if she was willing to die? She replied, "I am quite willing either to live or die; I am willing to be in pain; I am willing to be so always (as she was then,) if that was the will of God. I will what God willeth." They asked her whether she was willing to die that night? She answered, "*yes, if it be God's will.*" And seemed to speak all with that perfect composure of spirit, and with such a chearful and pleasant countenance, that it filled them with admiration.

54. She was very weak a considerable time before she died, having pined away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones; and therefore could say but little, and manifested her mind very much by signs. She said,

"I have matter enough to fill up all my time with talk, if I had but strength." A few days before her death, some asked her, whether she was *afraid to die*? She answered to this purpose, that she had not the least degree of fear of death. They asked her "why she would be so confident?" She answered, "If I should say otherwise, I should speak contrary to what I know. There is indeed a dark entry, that looks something dark, but on the other side there appears such a bright shining light, that I cannot be afraid!" She said not long before she died, "I used to be afraid how I should grapple with death; but God has shewed me that he can make it easy in great pain." Several days before she died, she could scarcely say any thing but just *yes* and *no*, to questions that were asked her, for she seemed to be dying for three days together; but seemed to continue in a sweet composure of soul, without interruption, to the last, and died as a person that went to sleep, without any struggling, about noon, on Friday, June 27, 1743.

I proceed to the other instance. Her name is Phebe Bartlet, daughter of William Bartlet. I shall give the account as I took it from the mouth of her parents, whose veracity none that know them doubt of.

She was born in March, in the year 1731: About the latter end of April, or beginning of May, 1735, she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been converted a little before, at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion. Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not wont, in the counsels they gave to their children, particularly to direct themselves to her, by reason of her being so young, and as they supposed not capable of understanding. But after her brother had talked to her, they observed her very earnestly to listen to the advice they gave to the other children; and she was observed very constantly to retire, several times in a day, for secret prayer. She grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequent in her closet; till at last she was wont to visit  
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it five or six times in a day, and was so engaged in it, that nothing would at any time divert her, either by putting it out of her thoughts, or otherwise engaging her inclinations.

55. She once of her own accord spake of her unsuccessfulness, in that she could not find God. But on Thursday, the last day of July, about the middle of the day, the child being in the closet, where she used to retire, her mother heard her speaking aloud; which was unusual, and never had been observed before; and her voice seemed to be as of one exceedingly importunate; but her mother could distinctly hear only these words (spoken in her childish manner, but with extraordinary earnestness) "Pray, blessed Lord, give me salvation! I PRAY,--BEG,--pardon all my sins!" When the child had done prayer, she came out of the closet, and came and sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother earnestly asked her several times, What the matter was? before she would make any answer; but she continued exceedingly crying, and wreathing her body to and fro, like one in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her, Whether she was afraid that God would not give her salvation? She then answered, "Yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell!" Her mother then endeavoured to quiet her, and told her she would not have her cry, she must be a good girl, and pray every day, and she hoped God would give her salvation. But this did not quiet her at all; but she continued thus earnestly crying, and began to smile, and presently said with a smiling countenance, "Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me!" Her mother was surprized at the sudden alteration, and at the speech; and knew not what to make of it, but at first said nothing to her. The child presently spake again, and said, "There is another come to me, and there is another, there is three;" and being asked what she meant, she answered, "one is, Thy will be done, and there is another, Enjoy him for ever;" by which it seems that when the child said, there is three come to me, she meant three passages of the Catechism that came to her mind,

56. After the child had said this, she retired again into her closet; and her mother went over to her brother's, who was next neighbour; and when she came back, the child being come out of the closet, meets her mother with this chearful speech, *I can find God now!* referring to what she had before complained of, that she could not find God. Then the child spoke again, and said, "I love God!" her mother asked her, "how well she loved God, whether she loved God better than her sister Rachel did?" She answered, "Yes, better than any thing!" Then her eldest sister, referring to her saying, *she could not find God now*, asked her where she *could find God?* She answered, "in heaven." *Why*, said she, *have you been in heaven?* "No," said the child. By this it seems not to have been any imagination or any thing seen with bodily eyes, that she called God, when she said, *I can find God now*. Her mother asked her, Whether she was afraid of going to hell, and that had made her cry? She answered, "Yes, I was; but now I shan't." Her mother asked her, Whether she thought that God had given her salvation? she answered, Yes. Her mother asked her, When? She answered, To-day. She appeared all that afternoon exceeding joyful. One of the neighbours asked her, how she felt herself? She answered, "I feel better than ever I did." The neighbour asked her, what made her feel better? she answered, "God makes me." That evening as she lay a-bed, she called one of her little cousins that was present in the room, as having something to say to him; and when he came, she told him, that "Heaven was better than earth." The next day being Friday, her mother asking her her Catechism, asked her, "What God made her for?" She answered, "to serve him," and added, "every one should serve God, and get Christ."

57. The same day the elder children, when they came home from school, seemed much affected with the change in Phebe: and her sister Abigail standing by, her mother took occasion to counsel her, now to improve her time, to prepare for another world: on which Phebe burst out in tears, and cried out, Poor Nabby!

Nabby! Her mother told her she would not have her cry, she hoped that God would give Nabby salvation; but that did not quiet her, but she continued earnestly crying for some time; and when she had in a measure ceased, her sister Eunice being by her, she burst out again, and cried, Poor Eunice! and cried exceedingly; and when she had almost done, she went into another room, and there looked upon her sister Naomi; and burst out again, crying Poor Amy! Her mother was greatly affected, and knew not what to say. One of the neighbours coming in a little after, asked her what she had cried for? She seemed at first backward to tell the reason: her mother told her she might tell that person; upon which she said, "I cried because I was afraid they would go to hell."

58. At night a Minister, that was occasionally in the town, was at the house, and talked considerably with her, of the things of religion; and after he was gone, she sat leaning on the table, with tears running out of her eyes: and being asked what made her cry, she said, it was *thinking about God*. The next day being Saturday, she seemed great part of the day to be in a very affectionate frame, had four turns of crying, and seemed to endeavour to curb herself, and hide her tears, and was very backward to talk of the occasion of it. On the Sabbath-day she was asked whether she believed in God? she answered *yes*: and being told that Christ was the Son of God, she made ready answer, and said, *I know it*.

From this time there has appeared a very remarkable change in the child: she has been very strict upon the Sabbath, and seems to long for the Sabbath-day before it comes, and will often in the week time be enquiring how long it is to the Sabbath-day, and must have the days particularly counted over that are between, before she will be contented. And she seems to love God's house, and is very eager to go thither: her mother once asked her why she had such a mind to go? whether it was to see fine folks? She said, "No, it was to hear Mr. Edwards preach." When she is in the place of worship, she

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is very far from spending her time there as children of her age usually do, but appears with deep attention. She also appears very desirous at all opportunities to go to private religious meetings; and is very still and attentive at home in prayer-time, and has appeared affected in time of family-prayer. She seems to delight much in hearing religious conversation. When I once was there with some others that were strangers, and talked to her something of religion, she seemed more than ordinary attentive; and when we were gone, she looked out very wishfully after us, and said, "I wish they would come again!" Her mother asked her *why*: says she, "I love to hear them talk!"

59. She seems to have very much of the fear of God before her eyes, and an extraordinary dread of sin; of which her mother mentioned the following remarkable instance. Some time in August, the last year, she went with some bigger children, to get some plumbs, in a neighbour's lot, knowing nothing of any harm in what she did: but when she brought some of the plumbs into the house, her mother mildly reproved her, and told her that she must not get plumbs without leave, because it was sin: God had commanded her not to steal. The child seemed greatly surprized, and burst out into tears, and cried out, "I won't have these plumbs!" and turning to her sister Eunice, very earnestly said to her, "why did you ask me to go to that plumb-tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me." The other children did not seem to be much affected or concerned; but there was no pacifying Phebe. Her mother told her she might go and ask leave, and then it would not be sin for her to eat them; and sent one of the children to that end; and when she returned, her mother told her the owner had given leave, now she might eat them, and it would not be stealing. This stilled her a little while; but presently she broke out again into an exceeding fit of crying: her mother asked her what made her cry again? why she cried now, since they had asked leave? what it was that troubled her now? and asked her several times very earnestly, before she  
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made any answer; but at last said, "it was because it was sin." She continued a considerable time crying; and said, "I will not go again if Eunice asked me an hundred times;" and she retained her aversion to that fruit for a considerable time, under the remembrance of her former sin.

60. She at some times appears greatly affected and delighted with texts of Scripture that come to her mind. Particularly, about the beginning of November, the last year, that text came to her mind, Rev. iii. 20. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me." She spoke of it to those of the family with great appearance of joy, a smiling countenance, and elevation of voice; and afterwards she went into another room, where her mother overheard her talking very earnestly to the children about it, and particularly heard her say to them, three or four times over, with an air of exceeding joy and admiration, "*Why, it is to sup with God!*" At some time about the middle of the Winter, very late in the night, when all were a-bed, her mother perceived that she was awake, and heard her, as tho' she was weeping. She called to her, and asked her what was the matter. She answered with a low voice, so that her mother could not hear what she said; but thinking it might be occasioned by some spiritual affection, said no more to her; but perceived her to lie awake, and to continue in the same frame, for a considerable time. The next morning, she asked her whether she did not cry the last night? The child answered, "yes, I did cry a little, for I was thinking about God and Christ, and they loved me." Her mother asked her, whether to think of God and Christ's loving her made her cry? She answered, *yes, it does sometimes.*

61. She has often manifested a great concern for the good of other souls; and has been wont many times affectionately to counsel the other children. Once about the latter end of September, the last year, when she and some others of the children were in a room by themselves, a husking Indian corn,

corn, the child after a while came out and sat by the fire. Her mother took notice that she appeared with a more than ordinary serious and pensive countenance. At last she broke silence, and said, I have been talking to Nabby and Eunice. Her mother asked her what she had said to them. "Why, said she, I told them they must pray, and prepare to die, that they had but a little while to live in this world, and they must be always ready." When Nabby came out, her mother asked her, whether she had said that to them? "Yes, said she, *she said that and a great deal more.*" At other times, the child took her opportunities to talk to the other children about the great concern of their souls, sometimes, so as to set them into tears. She was once exceeding importunate with her mother to go with her sister Naomi to pray: Her mother endeavoured to put her off; but she pulled her by the sleeve, and seemed as if she would by no means be denied. At last her mother told her, that "Amy must go and pray herself;" "but, says the child, she will not go;" and persisted earnestly to beg of her mother to go with her.

She has manifested great love to her minister: particularly when I returned from my long journey for my health, the last Fall; when she heard of it, she appeared very joyful at the news, and told the children of it, with an elevated voice as the most joyful tidings; repeating it over and over, "Mr. Edwards is come home! Mr. Edwards is come home!" She still continues very constant in secret prayer, so far as can be observed (for she seems to have no desire that others should observe her when she retires, but seems to be a child of a reserved temper) and every night before she goes to bed, will say her Catechism, and will by no means miss it: she never forgot it but once, and then, after she was in bed, thought of it, and cried out in tears, "I han't said my Catechism!" and would not be quieted till her mother asked her the Catechism as she lay in bed. She sometimes appeared to be in doubt about the condition of her soul: but at other times seems to have no doubt, but when asked, replies without hesitation.



62. In the former part of this great work of God amongst us, till it got to its height, we seemed to be wonderfully blessed in all respects. Satan (as has been already observed) seemed to be unusually restrained: Persons that before had been involved in melancholy, seemed to be as it were waked out of it; and those that had been entangled with extraordinary temptations, were wonderfully set at liberty; and not only so, but it was the most remarkable time of health, that ever I knew since I have been in the town. But after this it seemed to be otherwise. When this work of God appeared to be at its greatest height, a poor weak man that belongs to the town, being in great spiritual trouble, was hurried to cut his throat, and made an attempt, but did not do it effectually. He after this continued a considerable time exceedingly overwhelmed with melancholy; but has now a long time been delivered by the light of God's countenance lifted up upon him.

63. In the latter part of May, it began to be very sensible that the Spirit of God was gradually withdrawing from us, and after this time Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful manner. The first instance wherein it appeared, was a person's putting an end to his own life, by cutting his throat. He was a gentleman of more than common understanding, of strict morals, religious in his behaviour, and an useful honourable person in the town, but was of a family that are exceeding prone to melancholy, and his mother was killed with it. The news of this extraordinarily affected the minds of the people here, and struck them as it were with astonishment. After this, multitudes in this, and other towns, seemed to have it strongly suggested to them, and pressed upon them, to do as this person had done. And many that seemed to be under no melancholy, nor were under any special trouble of mind, yet had it urged upon them, as if somebody had spoke to them, "Cut your own throat, now is a good opportunity. Now, now!" So that they were obliged to fight with all their might to resist it, and yet no reason suggested to them why they should do it.

64. After

64. After these things the instances of conversion were rare in comparison of what they had been (tho' that remarkable instance of the little child was after this) and the Spirit of God appeared sensibly withdrawing from all parts of the country: but religion remained here, and I believe in some other places, the main subject of conversation, for several months. And there were some turns, wherein God's work seemed something to revive, and we were ready to hope that all was going to be renewed again: yet in the main there was a gradual decline of that general, engaged lively spirit in religion, which had been before. But as to those who have been thought to be converted amongst us, in this time, they generally seem to be persons that have had an abiding change wrought on them: I have had particular acquaintance with many of them since, and they appear to have a new sense of things, new apprehensions and views of God, of the divine attributes, and Jesus Christ, and the great things of the Gospel: they have a new sense of the truth of them, and they affect them in a new manner; tho' it is very far from being always alike with them: they feel an inward ardour and burning of heart, the like to which they never experienced before: they have new appetites, new breathings and pantings of heart, *and groanings that cannot be uttered*. There is a new kind of inward labour and struggle of soul towards heaven and holiness.

65. Some that before were very rough in their tempers and manners seem to be remarkably softened and sweetened. And some have had their souls exceedingly filled and overwhelmed with light, love, and comfort, long since the work of God has ceased to be so remarkably carried on in a general way: and yet there is still a great deal of religious conversation, amongst young and old; a religious disposition is still maintained amongst our people, by their upholding frequent private religious meetings, and all sorts are generally worshipping God at such meetings, on Sabbath-nights, and in the evening after our public Lecture. Many children in the town do still keep up such meetings amongst themselves.

selves. I know of no one young person in the town that has returned to their former looseness or extravagancy in any respect; but we still remain a reformed people, and God has evidently made us a new people.

I can't say there has been no instance of any one person that has carried himself so, that others should justly be offended; nor am I so vain as to imagine that we have not been mistaken concerning any, or that there are none that pass amongst us for *sheep*, who are indeed *wolves* in sheep's cloathing, who probably may some time or other discover themselves by their fruits. We are not *so pure*, but that we have great cause to be humbled and ashamed, that we are *so impure*; nor *so religious* but that those who watch for our halting, may see things in us, whence they may take occasion to reproach us and religion. But in the main, there has been a great and marvellous work of conversion and sanctification amongst the people here.

66. Yet a great part of the country have not received the most favourable thoughts of this affair, and to this day many retain a jealousy concerning it, and prejudice against it: I have reason to think that the meanness and weakness of the instrument, that has been made use of in this town, has prejudiced many against it: but yet this circumstance of this great work of God, is analogous to other circumstances of it; God has so ordered the manner of it in many respects, as remarkably to shew it to be his own peculiar work, and to secure the glory of it wholly to his own Almighty power and sovereign grace. And whatever the circumstances and means have been, yet *so* hath it pleased God to work! and we are evidently a people blessed of the Lord! and here *in this corner of the world*, God dwells and manifests his glory.

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